

# HOSPICE HAPPENINGS

Compassionate care for the terminally ill, their caregivers and their families

Serving our community since 1978



Volunteer Hospice of Clallam County is a 501(c)3 non-profit charitable organization, whose service area stretches from Diamond Point to Joyce.

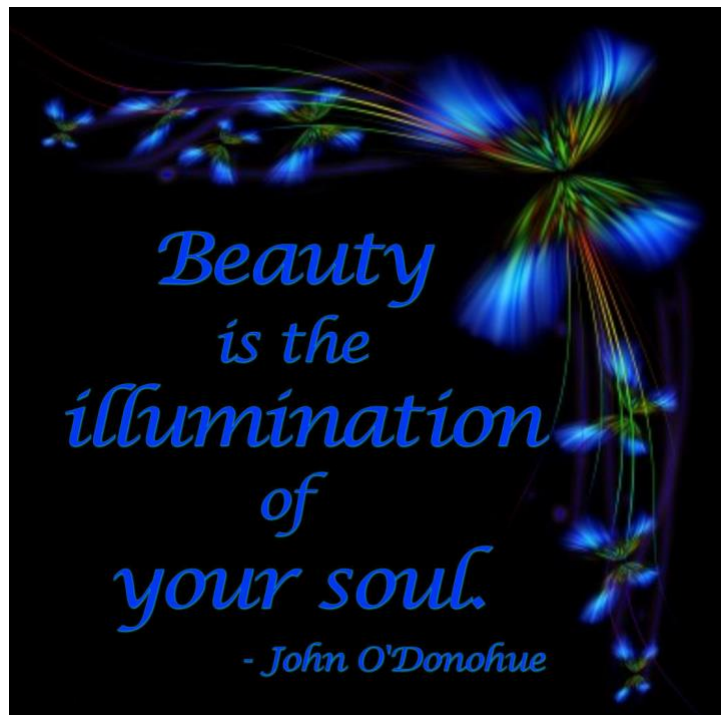
The mission of Volunteer Hospice of Clallam County is to provide physical, emotional and spiritual support to terminally ill patients and their families with free around the clock registered nursing availability and trained volunteers.

This support enables patients to live out their final days as fully and comfortably as possible. Ongoing grief support services are also offered to the families and anyone in the community who has experienced the death of a loved one.

Since its inception in 1978, all services have been provided free of charge to patients and their families; VHOCC does not bill any government agency for its services.

## THE FIRST YEAR OF GRIEF - A PERSONAL ACCOUNT

I have journaled for a number of years but never so much as during this past year of grieving the death of Jelorma, my wife of 47 years. I have come to recognize that my journal is truly a therapist, one that has lots of unconditional positive regard and whose only request is that I keep exploring who I am and what the journey is about. I now see that the one big thing I've gained from the remarkable counsel and teaching of Midge, Astrid, and Tara is a sense of freedom about how I approach this journey.



Looking at my journaling and reflecting on the past year, I see three distinct phases. Months 1-3 were cry your guts out, carry on and re-invent yourself as best you can. In months 4-8 I started attending a VHOCC grief support group and **continued on page 2**



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### Hospice Hugs

*for the Volunteer of the Month Program*

- Belle Creperie
- Chestnut Cottage Restaurant
- First Street Haven
- Lila Morris, Massage
- Mariner Cafe
- Oak Table Cafe
- Traylor's Restaurant
- Willow Massage Therapy

*for their ongoing generous support*  
Olympic Laundry

*for paying attention*  
Walt Blendermann

*for their unwavering dedication*

### THANK YOU TO OUR NURSES

### Volunteer of the Month

- December: **Sally Featherstone**
- January: **Angela Addis**
- February: **Tara Clark**
- March: **Charles Brown**
- April: **Volunteer Appreciation Lunch for ALL volunteers**

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at about the same time I started looking to date women. Dating was helpful in a way I think because it provided a distraction and some relief from the hard work. It also led to the question of whether it was too soon for me to be doing this.

My answer of course is that it was not too soon, because I decided to do it, and that's who I was at the time. I moved out of the dating phase after having a brief infatuation with a woman who very importantly introduced me to the writing of Irish philosopher and poet John O'Donohue.

Months 9-12 have involved serious internal and external transformation highlighted by the decision to move to Port Townsend, a lot of study of John O'Donohue, becoming affiliated with the Quimper Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (QUUF), participation in an intense ten-week course on building your own theology, and buying a new house. This period has been both exhilarating and disorienting, but along the way I have discovered a better sense of the poets I am truly attracted to and why (Mary Oliver, David Whyte, Dan Gerber and William Stafford). This has fed my renewed efforts to write poetry which had completely stopped through the latter stages of Jelorma's illness.

So with all the external changes in my life, the most satisfying development in the last couple months is that I have totally recommitted to my relationship with Jelorma. I have begun to better appreciate the gift of memory with all the joys and tears it can bring. I am now collecting all of her writing I can find, special pictures, favorite objects and books, and using these with my memories to better understand her and our relationship. I think this is making me a better man for me, the world, and as my smart daughter reminded me, for Jelorma. It has also greatly enriched conversations with my daughter around our shared grieving.

But there's an important reminder here that I got recently from reading Mark Epstein's latest book, "Advice Not Given: A Guide to Getting Over Yourself", which is that the first element of the Buddha's Eightfold Path, Right View, is most fundamentally a deep recognition of and a way of responding to the impermanence of all things. With respect to Jelorma, this means relishing a memory of her every day and then moving on in light of all I've learned and continue to learn from her.

*by Mike McClean*

**LIVING ALONE NOW**  
**PRACTICAL ADVICE**  
**ON HOME AND AUTO MAINTENANCE**

VHOCC's Grief and Bereavement Program is offering a "Living Alone Now" workshop, April 25 from 2-4 pm, at Hospice House, 810 S. Albert St., Port Angeles. The workshop is designed to assist those experiencing a recent transition due to loss of a life partner and facing for the first time issues of home and auto maintenance.

Michael Bucierka will provide information on what systems in your home need regular maintenance to avoid an emergency, and what to do in case of an emergency. He will provide suggestions on maintenance that can be performed by the homeowner and when professional assistance is recommended. The goal is for attendees to be able to correctly respond to "What will you do if . . .?" and "Do you know where . . .?" For example, do you know where your water shut-off valve is located? Mr. Bucierka brings to the workshop extensive experience as a former licensed general contractor, specializing in residential construction and remodeling. He was also a home inspector and residential maintenance professional. Basic, periodic car maintenance will also be discussed.

The workshop is free and open to the public. As space is limited, pre-registration is required by calling 360-452-1511 or emailing [vsm@vhocc.org](mailto:vsm@vhocc.org). VHOCC is fortunate to have Michael volunteer his expertise in providing this opportunity to the community. Anyone with questions about the "what", "when", "where" and "why" of home and vehicle maintenance is encouraged to attend.

**VHOCC IS GROWING!**

Just ask the staff and volunteers who work in our current hospice office—it is bursting at the seams. As we have grown over the last few years, the space for equipment and supplies, lending closet, nurses and staff has been outgrown.

Last fall we began to search for a new home and, after viewing many locations, serendipity struck. In inquiring about two adjoined vacant lots at Race and 8<sup>th</sup> Street the owner of those lots asked if we might also be interested in the building next door. With a minimum of fuss, we negotiated a deal and, as of early December 2017, VHOCC became the proud new owner of the 3700 square foot office building on the corner of Race and 8<sup>th</sup> Street and the two vacant lots next door. The office building was built in the late 1970s and is still fresh and contemporary. It will house all administration, nursing and volunteer services. We are designing an addition for storage that will be built on the empty lots to accommodate our equipment, supplies and lending closet. The architect we have hired, Bill Lindberg, designed the original building 40 years ago, at about the time Rose Crumb founded her hospice. More serendipity.

Construction and some remodeling of the existing building will begin in the next few months and we will move next year. This will ensure that we will always be prepared and able to meet the community's hospice needs. With our special nursing staff and our committed volunteers, Volunteer Hospice of Clallam County can carry Rose's creation far into the future. We look forward to inviting the community to share in a celebration of our new digs and our ongoing work to keep Rose's vision alive and vibrant.

**40<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY: WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU**

If you have a connection with VHOCC, we'd like you to share your story. The goal is to allow our community to see the face and heart of VHOCC. During our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary VHOCC will focus on its people—the hospice patients and their loved ones, the registered nurses who provide bedside nursing care, the 180 volunteers in service, and our generous benefactors. It is through VHOCC that many have learned the grace of being served, and the blessing of being of service.

If you are willing to share your experiences, please call 360-775-7806 or email [vsm@vhocc.org](mailto:vsm@vhocc.org). An interview will be scheduled at your convenience. Your story is important to us and to our community.



Volunteer Hospice of Clallam County  
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Port Angeles, WA 98362

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**1978-2018**

**40 years of serving  
the community**

**Volunteer Hospice of  
Clallam County**

**Events**

**April 16** - National Healthcare Day - Symposium at OMC, Port Angeles

**May 13-20** - ESPRIT Conference, PA

**May** - Louella Gerbhardt Memorial Golf Classic, Bellingham, WA

**May 15** - Soroptimists: Tea with SHE, Sequim

**May 24** - Lady Niners Golf Tournament at Cedars at Dungeness Golf Course, Sequim

**Community Orientation to Volunteer Hospice**

First Thursday every month, 11 am - noon, Sequim

First Friday every month, 10 am - 11 am, Port Angeles

(call the Volunteer Services Manager 360-775-7806)

**Programs: information & register at 360-452-1511**

Community Education & Volunteer Training Series

Wednesdays, Sept. 19 - Oct. 24, 6 - 8 pm, Port Angeles

Grief Support Groups - Open to anyone in the community

Wednesdays, May 23 - July 11, 6 - 7:30 pm, Port Angeles

Mondays, July 9 - August 6, 1 - 3 pm, Sequim

Check-In Support Groups in Sequim and Port Angeles (after completion of one of our Grief Support Groups)

One-on-One Grief Support to anyone in the community

**Living Alone Now Workshop: Practical Advice**

Home & Auto Maintenance

Wednesday April 25, 2 - 4 pm, Port Angeles